

THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Cowper.*



AT THE LAWYER'S OFFICE.

LAURA LOFT; A TALE OF WOMAN'S RIGHTS.

BY MRS. PROSSER.

CHAPTER I.—HURLEY HALL.

"Now, my dear, I'd cut it crossways, that's what I'd do," said Mrs. Batts; "crossways goes further, and it don't signify for seams in black."

Mrs. Batts bit off her thread as she spoke, and looked frowningly through her glasses at the young

woman who stood by her side balancing a bright pair of scissors in hand, and looking with an undecided air at the work on the table.

"I can assure you, my dear," said Mrs. Batts again, as she drew her new thread through her mouth and pointed it ready for the needle with a twist of her thumb and finger, "I've got a great idee of crossways; it was poor Batts put me up to it, for he was such a man for cutting on the straight."

The young woman did not pay any other attention

to this "contrarious" statement than to smile at it; but, after a little more consideration, looked determined, spread out the stuff, and brought the scissors to bear on it.

"I've done it," she cried; "I hope it's for the best; I think it will save a little. Oh, dear! what a new word that is in this house—'save!'"

"If it had been learnt and said *always*, likely is, it might never a' been said at all—that's where it is," remarked Mrs. Batts, shaking her head and making a knot to her thread.

"Poor master!" cried the girl; "he little knew what he was doing, I'm sure. Poor mistress! and oh, the young ladies! It goes to my heart to think of them."

"The very stones and them as has got no hearts might say that; and what they'll do is a puzzle, without their relations takes to them," said Mrs. Batts.

"Relations! who'd be on the pity of relations?" said the girl.

"None as could help it. Not but what I can speak to goodness in relations, I'm sure. Poor Batts, when he was ill, now, the doctor that come to him, as was no relation at all, wouldn't take a penny. 'No,' says he, 'you've worked for me, Batts, while you'd a leg to stand on and hold a needle, and now,' says he, 'I'll do for you;' and he did for him, too."

"But the doctor wasn't a relation," said the girl.

"Relation! Why, my dear, he was a gentleman, and lived stylish, like these people, and kep' his horse and man, and shay; but it's what I say, some relations is up to the mark, and some isn't."

The work went on in silence till a young lady came to ask a question, and Mrs. Batts took the opportunity of suggesting a "try on."

"Oh, not now, Mrs. Batts; I'm very busy and tired, and would rather have a misfit than have the worry." The young lady looked weary and anxious enough to prove she spoke truth.

"Then I wouldn't, mum, for I've know'd fits as come of theirselves, as you may say, a deal more easy than them as took hours in fixing; and I hope as yours will be the same, which, being black, it won't signify so much," cried Mrs. Batts with decision, laying down the pattern she had taken up, as if she hoped this little concession had done something for the good of the family.

"Now," she cried, when they were alone again, "what's a relation to do for *that* poor thing, one foot in the grave, as you may say, and out of spirits in the general way; which isn't wonderful when she looks forward to what's before her in a long pilgrimaging in life."

The young woman, who was used to her companion's enigmas and contradictions, merely answered that she hoped Miss Aline would be able to make her way; she had heard of a good friend, a lady come from some distance.

"I wish it may come good," said Mrs. Batts; "there's some ladies going as is wonderful in their ways of helping them as wants it, and does a power of useful things. There's one I heard tell of as took girls off to some place and got 'em homes, and another as took off young women and got 'em married; and there's the grand place where there's hundreds and hundreds of poor little dears with no father nor mother, brought up like their own, only he's a man; but it's all the same who does it, while the good's done; and there's Lady Augusta, she's—" here her voice failed.

"Miss Loft is the lady that has taken to Miss Aline," said the girl.

"Miss Loft! What, of Hurley Hall?" cried Mrs. Batts, in astonishment.

"Yes, I think that's the place; I know it's true, for little Miss Myra told me. Do you know anything about her?"

"*Know!* I should think I'd ought to know! Why, wasn't Hurley my native place, and didn't I marry poor Batts from there?"

"That was before my time."

"Yes—twenty-five years we was married, and ten years I've been a widder, so it's thirty-five since I come away for good; but I've been there on times, and always went to see the family, which was all dead long ago."

At this very remarkable statement the girl looked up for explanation.

"Yes," continued Mrs. Batts, "not one of them left; but there was only the old lady which kep' it up, and then the Lofts come, *that* was her nephew."

"And this Miss Loft is a niece, I suppose?"

"Well, she've got a father—*that's it*," said Mrs. Batts, nodding mysteriously to complete the explanation.

"And the nephew is her father?"

"Yes; and it's her as is all for the women, and makes things uncomfortable, and none on 'em likes her, they say, but she's very civil to speak to, and she says to me when I was there (to see after my poor aunt's things as she left me), 'Mrs. Batts,' she says, 'I hears you are a widder,' and with that she smiles."

Mrs. Batts' historical reminiscences of the lady, which were voluminous, were little more enlightening than those given; but the girl made out from them that Miss Loft had become unpopular at home from what some would call heroic efforts to recover the rights and privileges of her sex.

As the questions further put did not bring more intelligible answers, we will take the matter from Mrs. Batts, and give the reader an insight into Laura Loft's history.

She was the daughter of a gentleman of considerable property and position, and had, for sixteen years, been the only child, but the birth of a boy at the end of that time had dethroned her, and she ceased to be the idol of her parents. Mr. Loft was a vain man, wonderfully so; he lived on the incense of admiration. It was not important to him through what channel it came, nor whether those who furnished it were sources to be respected; having been flattered on his own particular account for his own particular possessions and acquirements, he was now earnestly alive to the secondary flattery that came to him on his daughter Laura's part. She was so clever—but who could wonder at that with such a father? She was so wonderfully up in everything—but who could wonder at that with such a father to train her, and with such training? To do Mr. Loft justice, he spared neither trouble nor expense in educating his daughter, and her by no means ordinary abilities afforded him a fair field on which to sow in hopes of reaping a rich harvest of display. The best schools, the best masters, the best of all and everything that money and ingenuity could provide, were furnished for her culture, and it was not strange that she learned from it all to look on herself as one alone in a world that stood cap in hand waiting to bow to her.

Laura inherited her father's love of admiration, but she had much more discretion in concealing her feelings, so that, even as a girl, she had a proud self-contained manner that gave her a dignified air to her father, but won for her from dispassionate judges the character of insolent conceit; and, indeed, her father's efforts on her behalf, together with his example, had worked balefully on her, and made her at sixteen as disagreeable a young lady as could be well imagined. But she was one morning taken by surprise with the news that Master Tommy had arrived.

Yes, a son! that long-despaired of boon had at length been vouchsafed to Mr. Loft. She was much too self-occupied to have new affections to bestow, and was a little offended, even at first, at the overwhelming delight of her father. Had she not been his idol, his sufficient happiness, for sixteen years? But, as her rights were not invaded during Tommy's babyhood, she did not, till a few years had elapsed, understand fully how seriously he had superseded her, and gave only negative signs of displeasure; yet, even from the first, she felt his influence, and discovered that *he not she* was the pivot on which the family bliss was now to turn.

As to good Mrs. Loft, she had long felt anything but comfort in her daughter, who took little pains to conceal her contempt for her authority. She had helped her husband to spoil her in her infancy and childhood, and when she felt that she was passing from under her hand, had tried to bribe her into a return of love for love by unlimited indulgence; but, sure of power from her father, Laura had proudly despised all her forbearance and overtures, and entirely thrown off the motherly yoke. Mrs. Loft mourned over her, and would have recovered her, but the desire and effort were vain, for her father's fiat made all bow to his daughter's will. It was, therefore, not surprising that little Tommy came to his mother's heart as a dear messenger of rest; as an object on which her love might flow out without danger of rebuff. Mrs. Loft's eyes grew bright as she gazed at the round face on her knee, and felt sure she had some one she might love to her heart's content. Wonderful to say, she took no warning from the mistake made in Laura's training, but heartily co-operated with her husband in trying to make her son as unmanageable as his sister had long become.

The first outbreak of Laura's positive wrath with her brother showed itself on her twenty-first birthday, when he was five years old. Her birthday had been made a day of great importance; she had always received very costly gifts, and the whole house had greeted her with deferential congratulations, for she was, until the heir was born, looked on by all as the undoubted heiress of Hurley. The first anniversaries that occurred after Tommy's advent were kept with the same festivity and apparent devotion to her, and even Tommy was furnished with a gift to propitiate her; but on that day, one she had anticipated nearly all her life as the era of her freedom from human control, when she would stand out in proud individuality, a serpent rose in her path, and, wonderful as such an assertion would have sounded in the ears of good Mrs. Loft, that serpent was Tommy. There was no joy, no party, no visitors, no congratulations, for Tommy had the measles! To see Mr. and Mrs. Loft you would have thought they had the measles too, for their eyes were red and their cheeks

swollen with weeping; while the whole house was in commotion, hurrying hither and thither, but moving like mutes, and looking as if the fate of the family—the empire—the universe, depended on Tommy. She shut herself up in her room. If she could have remembered the time when precisely the same state of things had prevailed through her having measles, she might reasonably have forgiven Tommy, but she felt unutterable disgust at this evidence of her fall. Pale and trembling with indignation, she sat pondering many things that had occurred, but which had hardly before shaped themselves as facts. One was a letter from her uncle, Walter Peckchaff, of Rosemary Hill, congratulating her father on having at last "a son and heir." A few years back she had not attached much importance to the expression, but now it came home to her that she was no longer the representative of her father's wealth. This boy—this intruder, had defrauded her of all! She was through him a cipher in the house; no one now trembled to displease her; she herself was often half rebuked by her father for not bowing to the rising sun! He had robbed her of the hearts (she did not much value them) and the homage of her parents, and to crown all he had taken from her her inheritance. Tears of disappointment stole slowly and silently down her pale cheek, and she tried in vain to conceal, under a haughty calm exterior, the passions that raged within.

Mr. Loft, meeting her on the staircase, thought her agitation proceeded from concern for "the family trouble," and innocently assured her the darling child was pronounced by Dr. Bowler to be better, and there was no danger now.

"I am glad you are so happy," she replied; "I am going into the town this morning to see my lawyer. Can I carry any letter for you?"

"Your lawyer, Laura!" he exclaimed with surprise.

"Yes, I dare say you have forgotten it; but I am of age to-day. I wish to ascertain exactly what the legacy left to me by my aunt amounts to with its accumulated interest."

"My dear, you won't; you will wait till I can go with you!" cried Mr. Loft, staggered at this announcement.

"Ah, no; I am quite capable of managing the business; and there is no necessity to take you from 'watching the nursery,'" she replied, with mingled scorn and asperity.

Now began an altercation which ended with the father making reproaches without restraint of temper, while she recriminated with guarded but cutting sarcasm. He called her ungrateful. She charged him with what she felt to be her wrongs, and they parted in a very unpleasant state of feeling.

During her drive to Great Hurley, she wreaked her wrath in bitter reflections on the innocent Tommy. "Twenty girls, if they had come, would not have supplanted me; but this tiny thing, because he is a boy, has made me in effect an outcast. A boy! Why should it be?" she murmured to herself again and again.

The lawyer, though he had heard of her extraordinary parts, was amazed at her acuteness of perception and power of bringing reason to bear on all things discussed; he made her so far happy that she found by allowing him to invest the principal where a very large interest was given, she was mistress of an income on which she could live in respectable

independence without being compelled to remain a daily witness of the triumph of her supplanter.

A large placard placed on the opposite wall attracted her as she was stepping into the carriage to return. It said that a meeting would be held that morning at the town-hall on the subject of the "rights of women." Such and such points would be discussed, and Mrs. Strong and others would address the audience. She suddenly resolved to be present. It was precisely the hour. The "rights of women" was a most harmonious title to her in the present state of her feelings. The theme had more than once been introduced at the hall, and she had read much that was written about it, but Mr. Loft had always treated it with derision. While he had maintained her rights she had suffered the matter to pass without questioning, but since he had begun to turn his back on her she had read with greater personal interest the reports of meetings and speeches; now she would go and ascertain what ground was taken, and how it was occupied.

The effect of this step was to give a definite form to her till then undecided resolves. She would thenceforth give herself to the advocacy of a cause worthy, as her own wrongs taught her, of the sacrifice. Yes, she would devote her time, energies, talent, and fortune, such as it was, to the glorious task of emancipating woman from her present degraded position in relation to the other sex, and elevating her to her proper place.

She was so elated with her scheme that she looked quite radiant with triumph when she met her father on her return. She speedily announced her intentions. His surprise amounted to consternation. He had looked on her to be his right hand in the training of his son; but the will he had done his utmost to harden he had no power to soften, and he saw that she would carry out her purpose.

Mrs. Loft was also surprised, but not so much discomposed. She thought her dear Tommy would get on better without Laura than with her, and assured her husband that it was "only a freak;" and as to her leaving home, when their daughter had found out that a small income could not furnish the comforts to which she had been accustomed, she would return humbled and improved by experience.

"If I had contemplated this return," said Mr. Loft, "for all I have done for her, I should have been wiser. I have been my own foe in the matter, quite my own foe. If I had not given her such an education—had not introduced her into society where she was sure to shine—had not encouraged her powers in every way, and gratified her in giving and getting for her the admiration they were certainly worthy of, she would never have dreamed of behaving so."

"It is a bad thing to spoil children; I am afraid I am to blame as well as you, my dear; I petted poor Laura very foolishly when she was younger and would let me," said Mrs. Loft, kindly; *very kindly* she said it, and very sorry she looked as she finished her speech that she had said it.

A dark frown gathered on her husband's face, and his lip had a scornful curl as he answered, quickly, "I was not admitting nor hinting at any 'spoiling' on my part. I know nothing of your nursery follies; I hope you don't imagine that the enlarged and generous training I so fondly bestowed on her, is to be classed with your silly indulgence, and go with that under the head of 'spoiling'!"

"Ah no, surely not; I know what you did was

quite in a different way from what I did, but I meant between us both it has come to a bad state of things. Of course it was only in the nursery that I could spoil her; after she left it she was quite beyond me; I never could make her do anything that she did not choose to do; before I had finished teaching her her letters she would carry off her book to you and say you did it better," said the half-frightened mother.

Mr. Loft's scornful curl of the lip relaxed almost into a melancholy smile as the picture rose before him of his little Laura bringing her book to him appealingly, with the demand, "Teach me, papa!"

"If she had a mother capable of helping me in the grand work of her development, I believe things would have been different," he thought; and Mrs. Loft, seeing by his face that meditations by no means complimentary to her were passing within, thought wiser to retreat to the nursery, where the sight of Tommy would, she knew, rest her heart and raise her spirits. Even on a sick bed, peevish and nearly impossible to please, Tommy was enough to make her happiness. He had not been very tractable during the last two years; all her arts—and a mother's unrestrained love has many—were scarcely sufficient to keep him on good behaviour of a very average kind. During his illness he had not been checked in the slightest degree, and she felt more comfort in him just now while he lay asleep than when he was fretting or storming awake. Yet, with all her folly, she had not entirely spoiled him, nor did he despise and disregard her, as Laura had done at his age. "Sweet darling!" she cried as she gazed on him while sunk in a feverish slumber, "how like he is to Walter! oh, I really believe he will be a Peck-chaff," and devoutly did the wish accompany the thought.

But she did not consider that a spoiled "Peck-chaff" with a dash of "Loft" in him would not make a son to be the comfort of her old age. In vain his nurse, a faithful old servant, assured her continually that Master Tommy was getting Miss Loft's ways exactly, and would soon be as masterful if he wasn't checked. The answer was, "Ah! he must be made a good boy; but—" and there was always a reason for not making him good just yet. Now one was sufficiently ready, "How can I check the sweet darling while he is ill?"

ADVENTURES WITH PIRATES IN THE CHINA SEAS.

PIRATES and buccaneers have long been strange in Western waters. But in the far East "robbers of the sea" are still too common. Having just seen an account of an encounter of the boat's crew of one of Her Majesty's ships with pirates in the China seas, I think the readers of the "Leisure Hour" may like to read some recollections of my own adventures in these same seas, now many years ago.

On the 18th February, 1858, whilst lying at anchor in Hong Kong harbour, we heard of some pirates being in the neighbourhood. I therefore, in compliance with orders received, proceeded on board a gunboat, and placed myself under the orders of her commander, having two boats of the flagship to which I belonged under my charge, and accompanied by two midshipmen and an assistant-surgeon from the same vessel. Weighing our anchor we ran through

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the western passage, and steered for the island of Lintin, where we had reason to believe we should find them. However, before we reached the island we saw a junk close under the land, so altering our course we gave chase. The crew of the junk, seeing that they were chased, endeavoured to escape, but being unable to round a point of land, they ran their craft on shore, and before we could come up to them escaped.

Leaving a party of men on board her with orders to follow, we again directed our course for Lintin. As we approached the land we kept a sharp look-out for junks, but not a thing could we see, and after going round the back of the island were about to give it up and return, when we espied, as it were, a white pole, which, on a closer inspection, seemed to be the mast-head of a large junk, or lorcha, which was moored in Snug Creek, the entrance to which we could not for awhile discover. However, on pulling in with the two boats we made out the entrance, which was so narrow that we had to toss our oars on going in, although it opened into a nice harbour with a village at the head of it. Off this village lay the lorcha, whose white mast-heads had betrayed her snug retreat. The pirates, however, had been too sharp for us, for both village and lorcha were deserted.

Going cautiously in to guard against surprise, we boarded the vessel, which we soon got under way and towed off to the gunboat, where we made her fast for the night. On searching her we found her to be an English vessel which the pirates had captured. Her cargo consisted of wines and spirits, besides a quantity of other goods. She had several guns mounted, and was well found in all respects. Of the crew we could learn no tidings. They had probably been murdered or otherwise disposed of.

Having placed a sentry over the liquor, with a corporal in charge of the vessel, we went on board the gunboat and made all snug for the night, and as the accommodation on board those vessels is somewhat limited, we "pricked" for a soft plank, and were soon fast asleep.

Soon after midnight we were aroused by a fearful yell from the lorcha astern. To jump into the boat alongside and haul-to the lorcha by the hawser and scramble up her side was the work of a few moments, when a sight presented itself which makes me laugh when I think of it. The sentry and the corporal were both calling loudly for assistance, saying that "the pirates were upon them" and had knocked them down repeatedly. "There!" said the sentry, as we looked in vain for the enemy, "he has knocked me down again!" and sure enough he was down, when we discovered the true state of affairs. The corporal and the sentry had broached the cargo, and had been making a night of it, and were not so steady on their legs as they might have been; in fact, they were both very drunk. There was some swell on at the time, and the lorcha was rolling considerably, while the main boom of the vessel, having been badly secured, had broken adrift and was swinging from side to side, and had knocked down first the corporal and afterwards the sentry, who, in their drunken stupidity, had imagined the pirates were assaulting them, and they had raised the alarm. Placing them both under arrest, we sulkily returned to the gunboat, where we slept unmolested for the rest of the night. Next morning we got under way, and with the lorcha in tow returned to Hong Kong.

A few days afterwards I was fortunate enough to be again sent after some pirates who had committed several murders and robberies at a place called Mirs Bay, to the northward of Hong Kong. On this occasion I again had charge of two boats, and with them repaired on board another gunboat of a larger description than the other, to act in conjunction with but under the orders of her commander. Passing through the Lymoon, or eastern passage, we encountered a heavy cross sea, which caused the gunboat to pitch and roll tremendously, and impeded by the two boats which she towed astern, made but slow way through the water. The vessel rolled so heavily that the 68-pounder gun broke adrift, but was promptly secured without doing any damage. On entering Mirs Bay the water gradually smoothed, and we steamed between the numerous islands which here abounded, disturbing immense flocks of wild fowl, but seeing nothing of the game we were in search of. By sunset we had pretty well explored the west corner of the bay without success, and we began to think that our informers must have misled us. They, however, seemed so positive, and pointed to some likely-looking spots on the chart, that after a consultation we determined to have a further search for them on the morrow, and with that view came to an anchor for the night.

Next morning at daylight we weighed anchor and stood farther into the bay, threading our way through a perfect labyrinth of islands and creeks, where any number of piratical junks could lie hid and carry on their games with impunity. We were approaching an island called Grass Island, behind which we were assured we should find some of the vagabonds secreted, so we arranged a plan in order to cut off their retreat. The gunboat was to go round one side of the island, while I with my two boats proceeded by the other. Accordingly we separated; we had not gone far before we observed a small junk apparently making her escape. This we chased and captured without difficulty—her object was clearly to act as a decoy and lead us in another direction. Leaving a small guard on board her, we pushed on in chase of a large lorcha which we observed standing out from the land, and evidently attempting to escape to sea. In this she would certainly have succeeded, as there was a strong breeze blowing and she sailed well, while our boats were propelled by oars only, but that the boats were so placed as to cut off her retreat. As we neared each other we perceived her decks to be crowded with men, and also that she carried several large guns. On coming within range, any doubt as to her character was dispelled by a shower of grape with which they favoured us, a compliment we were not slow in returning from our brass twelve-pounder howitzer. Seeing escape impossible, and apparently not relishing a closer acquaintance, the Chinaman quickly altered his course, and steered boldly in towards the shore, with the evident intention of running his craft aground; nor could we frustrate the clever manoeuvre, though pulling as hard as we could to get alongside. The pirates managed their vessel beautifully. The wind was blowing dead on shore, and a heavy surf was breaking on the rocks, when just as we expected her to strike, and already amongst the breakers, they let go two anchors, and the lorcha immediately swung round with her head to seaward, whilst her stern grounded on the rocks. The crew then effected their escape over the stern

and scrambled up the hills in the rear; but some of them were drowned in the attempt, and not a few dropped by the shot which we poured upon them. Being anxious to get on board the lorch, I approached as near as I dared to go in the pinnace, the larger boat of the two, and then got into the cutter, which was a handier boat in a surf. Dropping our anchor some distance out, we veered in, till we were able to jump on board, but not before the boat had been nearly swamped in the attempt by a heavy sea which broke right over her, filling her up to the thwarts with water. As soon as we were safe on board, the boat hauled off into deep water, leaving some half-dozen of us on the vessel. We at once proceeded to search the ship, which proved to be a fine craft fully equipped with guns, swords, pikes, etc. We found one of the crew who had not had the courage to trust himself to the sea. We made a prisoner of him, and then went down below to search the hold, where we discovered a poor old fellow, a Chinese fisherman, who had been taken prisoner by the ruffians some days before. He was chained by the neck, arms, and legs, to the bottom of the ship, and had been tortured two or three times. Having satisfied ourselves that there was no one left on board, and finding that the rocks were coming through her sides, I gave orders to set fire to the vessel, which was done, and we then hailed to the boat to come and take us off. This proved no easy matter, as the sea had increased to such an extent that it was dangerous to approach. They made the attempt, however, and had to haul off again with the water over the thwarts.

At this moment two small Chinese fishing-boats came in sight, and seeing our position they most gallantly came in to our assistance. Each boat had one man in it, but their frail craft were no match for the elements, the sea tossed them about like nutshells; one of them was speedily dashed upon the rocks and the other split to pieces against the bows of the lorch, while the two poor fellows disappeared to rise no more. The crew of the cutter now veered breakers astern, hoping that they might drift upon us, but they did not come within our reach. The doctor, who was in the boat, took his coat off, and would certainly have jumped overboard to swim to us with a line, but I begged him to remain where he was rather than uselessly to sacrifice his life in such a vain attempt. In the meanwhile the flames had spread with great rapidity, although we had set fire to that part most remote from where we were standing in the bows. The whole of the stern and midships were enveloped in a blaze, which was working its way forward to where we were assembled. The rocks also had beat through the vessel's bottom, and it was evident she could not hold together much longer. Our position at this time was most critical; the flames were so close that we could scarcely bear the intense heat; the magazine we knew to be well stocked with powder, and I expected her to blow up every minute. Before us was a raging surf. We were all huddled together in the bows, six in number, including the prisoner and the old man we had saved. At this awful moment I told the men that if any of them thought that by jumping overboard they might catch hold of some of the lines towing from the boat they might do so. Swimming to the shore was quite out of the question. I could swim myself, but one or two of them could not. Two of them availed themselves of the

permission, and throwing away their rifles they plunged overboard, preferring the risk of being drowned to the certainty of being blown up. I was thankful to see them reach the ropes and hauled safely into the boat. The coxswain and I were now left with the prisoner and the old man, who was so weak from starvation as to be utterly unable to help himself. The crew of the cutter now made a last desperate effort to reach us, and approached so close that we all sprung overboard, and were dragged into the boat. We then manned the boat's cable, and hauled her off with the water up to our waists in the boats. We had not got more than fifty yards from the lorch when she blew up with a terrific explosion, the burning spars flying far over our heads, and covering us with splinters and burning wood, which fell hissing into the sea around us. I should have much liked to have saved this fine vessel, which mounted fifteen guns, one of them a thirty-two pounder, but it was impossible.

We had no sooner disposed of this awkward customer than we espied another junk making her escape up a creek. We at once gave chase to her. The crew deserted on our approach, and we took possession of her. She was an old craft, mounting only two guns, and had evidently once been a trader. Leaving the prisoner on board with a couple of hands in charge, we proceeded to join the gunboat, which we could hear firing at the back of the island. We soon came in sight, and found a spirited action going on between the gunboat and two large heavily-armed piratical junks moored close in shore off a village. This place was evidently their nest, and they seemed determined to defend it to the last. It appeared that the junks had commenced the action by firing on the gunboat as soon as she came in sight. On going alongside the gunboat I found her gallant commander in his shirt-sleeves directing and firing his big gun, which was pouring forth a brisk fire of shot and shell upon the enemy. Our arrival with the doctor was most opportune, as we found one man badly wounded and requiring medical attendance, while our crew were also able to assist in working the big guns, which were firing at a distance of three hundred yards. The Chinamen fought well and responded most heartily from some forty guns of all sizes. The junks mounted about twenty guns apiece, all of which were transported to one side of their vessel, so that every gun could be brought to bear upon us. Both junks also were crowded with men. The action had gone on for some time, our fire doing great execution, but theirs being ill-directed and generally over our heads, when a shell exploded the magazine of one of the junks, which immediately blew up with a tremendous explosion, sending masts, guns, and men into the air. We thereupon gave three rattling cheers, which were answered by yells of defiance from the other junk, whose crew, nothing daunted by the fate of their comrades, fought more desperately than ever. Presently, however, the fore magazine of this junk also exploded, blowing up the fore part of the vessel and killing a great number of her crew. The remainder then jumped overboard and made for the shore. We then pulled in with the boats, landed, and burnt the village which belonged to the pirates. The first junk was burnt to the water's edge, and of the second nothing remained but part of the stern, which with a few guns remained above water.

By this time, being both tired and hungry, we

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returned on board the gunboat and piped to dinner. Whilst enjoying our frugal meal, we observed great numbers of Chinamen come down to the burning junks, no doubt to see what they could pick up. Not caring to molest them, we sat and watched them, when suddenly the after magazine of the last junk blew up, sending the greater part of them into the air together.

After dinner we endeavoured to recover some of the guns, but without success, as they had mostly sunk in deep water, and we had no time to attempt to get them up again, so taking a few which were lying in shoal water, we returned on board and soon afterwards got under way for Hong Kong.

As we steamed away we observed numbers of the pirates who had escaped from the lorchas watching us from the hills. We might perhaps have captured some of them, as, being on an island, they could not well have escaped; however, we had given them a pretty severe lesson, and darkness was coming on, so we deemed it prudent to leave them unmolested. We towed back the two small junks, which were, however, of no value, and arrived at Hong Kong during the night. Had we been able to capture either of the two large junks which we destroyed, and which fought so well, we should have made some money by them, as they were most valuable vessels, their masts alone being of considerable worth. As it was, we got the thanks of the admiral, and afterwards of the Admiralty, for our exertions, and a Liberal Parliament voted us the munificent sum of £180 to be distributed amongst us.

W. R. K.

RUSTIC PLEASURES.

BY THE REV. S. B. JAMES.

IT is not distance that lends, in my case, enchantment to the view. I am no townsman over-estimating the country because it is beyond his grasp. Even while I write the silver birch and the yellow ringleted laburnum, relieved by white and "lilac-coloured" lilac, and relieved still more by solemn but now bright-green-tipped yew, wave their welcome invitation to me to "take a turn in the garden." Moreover, the garden is not bounded by streets, nor even, except on a certain sunny side, by brick-wall. I should, from the garden walks, look over a pleasant valley, with possibly no human being, unless it were a shepherd or farm-labourer, to make or mar my meditations. Very peaceful and very soothing, some people would say very monotonous, it all is, and I write from the midst of it all, and not from the beating heart and the glowing heat of London or Liverpool, Glasgow or Birmingham, or any other populous hive of busy men.

No doubt distance does lend enchantment to many an experience, as Horace said it did in his time. No doubt now as then a soldier wishes he had been a merchant, and a merchant a soldier. But that is not at all my case in calling rustic experiences by the name of pleasures. To me they are pleasures of the truest kind. I would not be a dweller in cities, except for a winter month or two, if anybody would offer me a third more income than now comes to my share. And this preliminary confession and disburthenment may add weight to, or at least give evidence of impartiality in, this expression of my sentiments.

A country walk! For simplicity and intensity of pleasure what can excel a country walk? One finds

this chiefly realised, even yet, in the neighbourhood of country towns. Villages and country "seats" are made up of country walks, and in great cities such pleasures as that of a "walk in the fields" are almost out of the question. Midway between these experiences lies the country-town experience, and near a country town you may meet, on all its sides, young people often freely mixed with seniors, on their way to some wood or dingle for an afternoon's enjoyment of the breeze and the shade and the sunshine. Railway stations do not always destroy the picturesqueness of the ramble, nor interfere with its pleasureableness. Great alterations they effect, but alterations are sometimes improvements, even in other than the merely utilitarian interests which prompt them. Railways do certainly modify the country walk, and diminish the number of available spots, near quiet towns, for walks to centre round. I used to know a wild and tangled lane leading to an almost equally wild and tangled wood, near a country town, unknown in those days to railways, coaches, or any other more stirring traffic than the weary tramp of gipsy feet, and the occasional passage of an adventurous tumbrel, axle-deep in mingled water and stiff clay mud. How the horses used to labour on, the dog-rose and blackberry-bush boughs vexing their eyes and scratching their flanks, and how deep the knees used to go down into the ruts and pools, I remember as if it were yesterday. A railway has destroyed all that now, and the lane is a good hard macadamised road. The nuts and nut-trees are no longer to be found in what used to be the big wood. Fritillaries, "orange-tips," and "red-admirals," no longer in such unusual abundance as when a boy that I knew something about spent summer half-holidays there, with a butterfly net and some biscuits, frequent the place. It is still used "for a walk," but more in memory of old times than for its rustic pleasantness, so sadly now diminished. The last time I sat there I could have wept warm tears of reminiscence, surprise, grief, and I know not what besides, in this place that knew me no more, that had forgotten so evidently my butterfly net, and its own mossy tree-seats and leafy covers. But my tears fell inward, checked by a screaming engine, a rattling waggonette, and various other signs of life and lawful progress.

The country walk is not so much in my present view, however, as the rustic pleasures that belong to residence in really country hamlets, villages, and districts. It is pleasant to see them from the tops of high embankments in all their picturesque and charming variety, but it is far pleasanter, notwithstanding the disenchantments of experience, to live in the midst of them. It is no small matter—though an abrupt descent from high embankments of sentiment to the lower level of eating and drinking is to be and is apologised for—to be quite sure of the new-laidness of the white-shelled or haply brown-shelled egg that graces the breakfast-table. It is well to be sure of the contents of the raised and decorated porkpie that invites you to the luncheon-board. The spring chickens, the tiny sparerib, and a few other such dinner dainties, are all the better and the sweeter for not being accompanied by any disquieting misgivings on the part of the eater as to what made them so plump and full. And as for the cream that completes the cup of tea and coffee, you are more satisfied for knowing that it is not milk going by the name of cream, and that the new milk has not been

twice or even once skimmed before it finds its way to the table. Against this is to be set off the difficulty of getting fresh fish in a country village, but that is not so rare an accomplishment of the managing partner in the matrimonial firm as it used to be. And rustic pleasures are not, or they would scarcely be worth so jubilant a strain of appreciative joy, composed of epicurean gratification.

To go down of a morning to your assembled household and read your letters with the music of the birds as an accompaniment, is something which stirs the heart to melody that cannot well be uttered aloud. The very whetting of the scythe that is not yet wholly superseded by more costly and more convenient machines, has a kind of music in its sound, and if not in its sound in its multiform suggestiveness of smooth grass, soft surface, and pleasant marchings up and down, children in hand.



I was going to say suggestiveness of croquet too. But croquet is not exclusively a rustic, though always a quasi-rustic game; nor is it to all rustic folk a pleasure. My own solitary croquet set is rusting under the summer-house seat, the mallets are mostly broken, the balls are worn (but not by croquet) all of one colour, and the lid of the box is dilapidated. And so, as I am mostly speaking words of experience, I omit croquet from further mention.

But those new-laid eggs ask to be written about in other than an epicurean fashion. It is exciting, after that mild kind of excitement which is, when compared to unhealthy and violent excitement, as a summer breeze to an August or autumnal storm, to go in search of eggs among ferny hedgerows and violet grass banks, and still more exciting to come upon a nest of seventeen or twenty-six (*experientia docet*) that have been accumulating for successive days or weeks. Poor brahma, and poor crevecoeur,

and poor cochin! Your eggs, that have been stored with such miserly, and perhaps such motherly care, must all go into the basket, and some of them will have to travel afterwards for many a mile of railway, you all ignorant of their destinies. And such is life, such is even chicken-life.

There are disadvantages and unpleasantnesses belonging to country life in the winter time, and also to country life in the summer time. A thrashing-machine, which hums its drone-like and dirge-like tune in my well-pleased ear at this moment, would be to some not wholly unreasonable people an intolerable nuisance. Tumbledown cottages that have got landlords almost as poor as the tenants, and of which the thatch is ready to fall off or fall through at a moment's notice, and without a choice or preference as to which fate would be the more becoming,—these are not pleasant sights to be seen.

But the thatch, if it were repaired, I did not mean to be led into saying one word against, when viewed as a thing of scenic effect. It is wonderfully picturesque sometimes, and the worst of it is, that the older it gets, and the more patched it gets, the prettier from a certain distance it looks. For distance, in regard to thatched cottages, does certainly lend enchantment to the view. With moderate repair to stave off absolute dismantlement, a few thatched roofs in the distance carry the thoughts away to simplicity and beauty and painters' landscapes, and much else that is soothing to the senses.

But there are undoubtedly disadvantages and unpleasantnesses "down in the country," as elevated townsmen call it. The thatched roofs harbour many insects and other things of the kind, and of other kinds too. The thrashing-machines may be too many in number and too persistent in their humming and droning. The roads may be too long imbedded in mud relieved by huge unbroken stones, for people who wish to go and want to go to London more than once or twice in the year. For, however *ornée* the cottage you live in (if you are so misguided as to rent a cottage *ornée* without knowing what the *ornée* covers from the light of the sun), you must go over country roads to get to the nearest railway station. And so must your friends who come and stay with you.

But notwithstanding all these little inconveniences, added to, in some cases, by the remoteness of the doctor's residence, the want of a post-office to buy stamps at, the difficulty of getting a leg of mutton without giving a week's notice at least, and the far-darting (*pace* Apollo) power of the lungs that are called into exercise by open-air-meeting enthusiasm, which, however commendable in itself, may become a great trial out of itself—notwithstanding all annoyances, give to me and keep for me a spot in the country, away from the strifes of—well, of *busy* and multitudinous men. I should not care much for a *rus in urbe*, or any other such attempt at impossibilities, but a genuine *rus* not in *urbe* but out of *urbe*, and ever so far removed from *urbe*, if I may so mangle grammar and case (it is only Latin grammar), is the happiest for a sunny-tempered mortal, and the least unhappy for a gloomy-tempered mortal, of all earth's many and outwardly diverse experiences and modes of life.

Chimney-stacks in all directions may be to some a charming sight to draw up the blind upon, but what

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are chimney-stacks, even when decorated with patent zinc tops for curing smoke, when compared with pear-trees in blossom, elm-trees in leaf, drooping willows, sweet-scented walnuts (what is there to equal the scent of a very young walnut leaf pressed

hoarsely croaking out their daily requiem over a tree, now felled, in which they have annually built their nests and reared their young, the ducks in the sluggish pond—all these things would never have succeeded in causing a moment's interest in the city



in the hand?), unbending oaks? I had, I confess, a London man staying with me for a short time, who was wholly, or perhaps I ought to say partly, unappreciative; and if London men ruled the world in matters of taste, the zest of country life would soon lose itself in the busier aspirations of thickly congregated men and women. "Isn't it lovely?" inquired I of this London merchant; "did you often see anything to excel it?"

"Often? I never saw anything prettier and sweeter, but—it would kill me in a week."

And so it might. At any rate it would have made him desperate. He went off by the train, that seemed made to puff out his eager bustling thoughts and excitements, with evident, but not uncivil, only perfectly uncontrollable, relief. The grey old church that calmly smiles across the valley to another church on the opposite height, the windmill that grinds and flaps and whirls in solitary evidence of commercial sympathies and speculations, the jackdaws that are

man's, or rather in this city man's, heart. He was urban to the backbone, as well as urbane in all that did not relate to rustic pursuits and pleasures.

Whether it is the constant habit of walking upon green turf, varied only by village roads and lanes, that causes the soles of my feet to blister, or ache, or swell, or become painful whenever I walk about London for a couple of days, I cannot tell, but such is my invariable experience. Asphalt and paving-stones are cleanly and useful contrivances, and they far excel the mud and roughness of country ways. For all their excellence, however, I feel always glad to exchange them back again for turf, with all its dampness, and big stones with all their unevenness. "There's nothing like leather," said the cobbler, and perhaps it is that principle that makes me say "there's nothing like *Rus*." Yet poets have in all ages sung to the ancient tune of "O fortunati nimium!" And the very element that the poet said to be wanting in the "fortunateness" of the rustics he sung of, is in

many cases supplied. "If they did but know how lucky they are!" was the burden of his cry. We do know, a great number of us modern rustics, what lucky people we are. We hear of the great meetings up in London without a single sigh of regret at our inability to be present at them. Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli are as real to us, as we handle the daily papers twenty-four hours after our betters up in the metropolis, as they are to the privileged people that can hear and see all statesmen and all heroes, all preachers and all poets. Down upon low basket-chairs, in retired nooks away from the sound of the door-bell, with magazines and library books if we be men, and portable sewing-machines and other devices if we be women, we are content with our second-hand news, our backward intelligences, our shabby coats and hats, our country manners, and our general rusticity. What could be better or happier in this world of care?

THE WORKING CLASSES ABROAD.

VII.—FRANCE—THE PROVINCES.

IN relation to the condition of the working classes in the French provinces, the agricultural population would seem to present the first claim to consideration. We must, however, looking to the design of these brief papers, pass them over with very slight notice, since little that could be stated with regard to them would greatly interest the English workman. From many causes, principally perhaps from the minute subdivision of the soil, and the resulting dearth of capital invested in its cultivation, so far at least as the cereals are concerned, the labourer on the land is very badly off, unless he happens to possess some personal interest in it; and even then his lot is not to be envied. The wages of labourers are lower by between 30 and 40 per cent. than they are with us; the earnings of an able-bodied man, who is fed and lodged by his employer, ranging from £7 or £8 a year to about £14 or £15 at the highest. If the labourer boards himself he may earn about 8s. a week, but hardly more, and he will have to exercise the most rigid economy, for he will be thrown off the land for near a hundred days in the year, and must at such seasons revert to some other employment. His food, clothing, and house accommodation are necessarily of the meanest kind, and it is evident that the circumstances of his life offer no sort of attraction to the labourers of our own country.

In glancing at the condition of the industrial handworkers of the provincial towns and cities, we shall select such of them only as offer details of special interest, or as are likely under any circumstances to afford employment to a migrating workman. The first to be noticed, as it is the nearest to our shores, is Calais.

In Calais a large number of Englishmen are constantly employed in the manufacture of lace or tulle, and a less number of Irish and Scotch are engaged in flax factories. These island workmen are on the whole a steady, respectable class, living in harmony with the native inhabitants, and bearing a character for good and careful work. The rate of wages varies from 24s. to 56s. a week, according to the quantity of work done—the work being paid by piece and not by time. In busy seasons the hands work all day and

half the night, and in the "dead season" only a part of the day. The cost of living is quite as high in Calais as in London.

In Boulogne the position of the working classes is accounted good. There is no lack of work, and the wages are above the average of the country, ranging from 2s. 2d. to as much as 3s. 6d. a day, and considerably more in the case of skilled work. Moreover, piece-work is much in vogue, and of course is generally preferred by the artisan as more profitable. Lodgings are pretty good, and are not dear; but the town is by no means well drained, and always suffers severely on the visitation of epidemics or cholera. The cost of living is somewhat higher, and clothing is dearer, than in London.

At Lille, a large centre of industry, where the cotton spinners number from seven to eight thousand, and those engaged in making lace and tulle are still more numerous, the wages vary from 2s. to 3s. a day for the men, and are not more than a third of those amounts for the women. The Lille workmen have established a number of mutual societies and benefit clubs, and they have this peculiar and commendable trait connected with them: the members meet for business in public-houses, because they can meet nowhere else, but instead of drinking for the good of the landlord, they pay him a halfpenny a week each, and do not drink, but transact their affairs soberly. The workers of Lille are active, intelligent, and independent, but unfortunately manifest little good feeling towards their employers.

Rouen is the chief seat of the cotton industry in Normandy, and its immediate neighbourhood abounds in large factories, some of them employing 500 hands each. The wages are good: fitters earn from 3s. 6d. to 4s. 9d. a day; smiths and turners, 6s.; iron-moulders, 4s. to 5s.; and "monteurs" 7d. to 8d. an hour. Englishmen who go to Rouen to work, though well received, do not as a rule remain long, as the food and way of life do not suit them; they are usually paid a full third higher than the natives, and are said to do double the work. The work in general is not of the best quality. The cost of living is but a trifle less than in England. The hours of labour are eleven or twelve daily.

Havre-de-Grace, where several branches of manufacture are carried on, offers no inducement to the Englishman seeking work. The wages of artisans and mechanics vary from 2s. to 4s. a day. The cost of necessities is very little less than in England, though luxuries and amusements are much cheaper. Many English workmen who have gone to Havre have been sent home again at the expense of her Majesty's Government; but the consuls have lately received strict orders not to relieve such persons in future at the public cost.

Rheims employs from thirty to forty thousand workpeople in the manufacture of wool. The wages of the workers of both sexes are miserably low, so low indeed that one is at a loss to account for them. Thus, it is hardly possible for a wool-carder to earn more than 10½d. a day, and even when he earns that he has to pay certain expenses which together amount to 2d., and bring his clear gains down to 8½d. But even at this beggarly rate he has a difficulty in finding employment, and has to beat about from one factory to another in search of it. Then again, he can only count on about 250 days' work in the year, so that his entire yearly gains are but £9. It will

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cost him at least £3 a year to lodge himself, and there will be £6 or 4½d. a day left for food and clothing. Should he be married, and his wife work with him, his earnings will be increased by a fourth, and the two will have to live on 5d. or 6d. a day, or rather less! Thus much for the poor wool-carder. That other industrials in Rheims, "the king-crowning city," are not much better off, is plain from the fact that the average incomes of her artisans range from £16 a year to £24.

The city of Lyons contains about 300 manufactories of silk, and there are 70,000 looms at work, employing 175,000 hands. The silk-weaver, working from five in the morning till ten at night, can earn 2s. 9½d., of which he has to pay one-half to the owner of the loom. The best paid weaver does not clear for himself 1s. 6d. a day. The mass of the workmen live in large houses built for their accommodation with lofty rooms to suit the Jacquard loom—one large room serving for workshop, kitchen, parlour, and bedroom for the whole family. The workmen are on the whole temperate in their habits, though fond of amusement, and given to manifest in public a rather defiant air of independence. The loom-owner is a sort of middleman; he receives the work from the master manufacturers, and hands it to the weaver, whom he pays for it by measure when it is done. He is in no respect their superior, but eats and drinks with them, and resorts to the same places of amusement. It is a standing complaint against the Lyonesse weavers that they appropriate a portion of the silk with which they are intrusted, and sell it privately for their own emolument. Both women and children work at the looms, and the work being paid by measure, the wife sometimes earns as much as the husband. Children from eight to twelve years of age are allowed by law to work eight hours a day, but there is no sort of supervision exercised, and in practice the children work as long as their parents choose. The earnings of apprentices belong to their masters for four years.

At Marseilles, in the large engineering establishments the ordinary labourers earn about 3s. a day, and the skilled workmen from 4s. to 5s. The same rate of wages prevails in the large soap-works and in the oil-mills. The dock-porters who load and unload vessels, earn about 4s. a day, and the ship-carpenters 5s. The agricultural labourer of the district gets from 20d. to 2s. The above wages have however undergone some modification owing to the disorganisation of industry since July, 1870. With the exception of bread, fruit, and wine, provisions are not cheaper in Marseilles than in England: fuel is dearer, but the winters being short, the annual cost for fuel is about the same. House accommodation is rather more costly than in England, though good lodging-houses for workmen have of late been built. Although many English firms have at various periods since 1815 established themselves in the South of France, and have started mills, foundries, shipbuilding-yards, engineering works, etc., etc., in which they have necessarily invested large capital, yet of all these speculations hardly a trace now remains. Various causes conspire to prevent any infusion of workpeople from the North among the industrials of Southern France; and it seems to have been proved by experience that here there is little or no field for British artisans or labourers. Of the crowds of Englishmen engaged in the formation of the railway works between Paris and the

Mediterranean, every man left the country immediately on the completion of their respective contracts, finding no inducement to remain.

At Nantes the wages of mechanics and artisans range from 1s. 10d. to 4s. or 5s. a day, while some of the skilled workmen earn as much as 10s., 12s., and even 15s. The wages of women are very low, being about 7½d. a day with food, or 1s. a day without. The day's labour is ten hours. Rent is high, and so is food, meat costing from 9d. to 1s. 6d. a pound. Little fresh meat, however, crosses the threshold of the mechanic, who feeds himself and family on vegetables, fruit, milk, salt-fish, bacon, and the rather doubtful preparations of the pork-shop. Groceries are dear, and have risen in price since the war; tea is near 7s. a pound, and sugar 8d. Wine is cheap—3d. to 5d. a quart—and beer is cheaper, a very good brewst being sold at less than 6d. a gallon. But everything has risen in price since the war, except labour, and it is a puzzle to know how some of the working classes live. Were it not for the "*Fourneaux Alimentaires*," where cheap dinners are cooked for the poorer citizens, the struggling workman would find himself miserably off in the winter. The general health of the working classes is good, and this is partly owing to the comfortable clothing they adopt. The women all knit, and everybody wears good stockings, and as they keep their feet constantly dry by the use of the wooden shoe, or sabot, they escape the colds, chills, and catarrhs which are the origin of so much fatal illness amongst our own poor.

At Bordeaux, the south-western capital of France, with a population of 200,000 souls, there are no special manufactures, but the various branches of mechanical industry are actively carried on. Foreign workmen are generally well received, and among them there are a considerable number of English, who, from the superior value of their labour, receive much higher wages than the natives, and not a few of whom have married French wives and seem to be permanently settled. Still, Bordeaux is not a place to which Englishmen can be advised to resort in search of employment, as there is no demand for them; a fact which has been abundantly proved by numbers who have come, and after being reduced to poverty have been glad to procure a passage home at the public expense. The wages of the native mechanics vary from 2s. to 5s. a day—those of British workmen from 5s. to 8s. But the cost of provisions to Englishmen is greater than in England by full twenty per cent., that is, if they choose to live as well as they live at home; while the cost of fuel and house accommodation is thirty per cent. dearer. Now and then English workmen are sent for by the Bordeaux employers, and are in that case engaged under contracts for certain work and for a certain period; but such engagements are exceptional. There is, in fact, among employers no inclination to encourage the immigration of English labour; the reason seems to be, not only the double outlay involved in their wages in trades carried on with limited capital, but their ignorance of French and their inability during a considerable time to understand orders. If an Englishman is specially engaged by an employer who offers him high wages, so that he has the prospect before him of saving money, there is nothing in the common diet, the way of life, the climate, or the sanitary conditions of the city, which need deter a steady, well-conducted man from proceeding to Bordeaux.

OUR IRON ROADS.

VI.—GENERAL SKETCH OF THE SYSTEM.

ON the 1st of January, 1872, there were in Great Britain about 15,500 miles of railway, distributed as follows:—England and Wales, 11,000 miles; Scotland, 2,500 miles; Ireland, 2,000 miles; and belonging in all to about 290 companies. Thirty of these are joint railways: for instance, the Birkenhead Railway belongs to the Great Western and London and North-Western Companies, the Bourn and Lynn line to the Great Northern and Midland, the Glasgow and Paisley to the Caledonian and Glasgow and South-Western Companies, and so forth. Many of the other lines are either worked or leased by some of the larger companies, and the result is that the number of working lines is reduced to something like 110.

It may be mentioned, in passing, that railways are well represented in the Legislature. In the House of Lords there are forty-eight, and in the House of Commons 122 directors, many of whom are on the boards of two companies, while some share in the directorate of three or four companies. There are besides many of the other members of both Houses who are extensive shareholders, and are thus interested. With such an army of supporters the companies have little difficulty in securing the success of the measures brought forward in their interest, while at the same time it is not so easy to carry great measures of reform in the public favour.

The total number of stations in Great Britain, including junctions and sidings, is about 10,000, nearly 6,000 of which afford accommodation for passengers. It will surprise many to read that in London and its suburbs there are no less than 150 stations, including junctions, of which the London, Chatham, and Dover Company possesses 21, the Great Eastern 24, and the other companies in proportion.

It has already been stated that in England and Wales there are 11,000 miles of line. Of this mileage more than half the entire length is in the possession of six of the large companies, as follows:—

London and North-Western	1,472
Great Western	1,387
North-Eastern	1,314
Midland	989
Great Eastern	822
Great Northern	544
	<hr/>
	6,528

It may be interesting to take some note of the work done by these and other great companies, and to refer briefly to the districts through which they pass. The great centre of the system is London; for a majority of the principal companies have their finest stations and carry on their management there, the lines stretching out from the metropolis in all directions. Every company which can by any possible means find a way to London does so, and strives to provide the route which will be most attractive to the public. The truth of this is evident from the fact that ten of the companies having termini in London, own nearly 7,000 miles of line, out of a total in England and Wales of 11,000.

Taken with regard to mileage, the first company in importance is the London and North-Western, with its head-quarters at Euston Square. The main line passes through Hertfordshire and Buckingham-

shire, with branches to Oxford and Cambridge, through Northampton and Warwickshire, with lines to Peterborough and Stamford; then past the old town of Chester, through densely populated Lancashire and Yorkshire, with a number of branches to accommodate the enormous trade of those districts. It then proceeds through Westmoreland, and ends at Carlisle, after a direct route of 300 miles from the metropolis. From Stafford and Crewe this company has lines branching off and running through the centre of Wales, thus forming a communication with the manufacturing districts of the south. The London and North-Western Company also possesses the chief communication with Dublin and the north of Ireland by their railway which traverses the hilly coast of North Wales, running through splendid scenery, and on through the Britannia Tubular Bridge to Holyhead. As a feeder to the London centre this company conveys a large share of the Scotch traffic, and the manufactures from the Lancashire and Staffordshire districts.

The Great Western Company, starting from Paddington, possesses an extensive district in Oxfordshire, Berks, Wilts, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, with lines in Worcestershire, Shropshire, and Monmouth. It also has a direct line *via* Swindon, through the most hilly part of Gloucestershire, along the South Wales Coast to New Milford, thus forming one link of communication between London and the south of Ireland. It also conveys to the metropolis most of the coal and iron and other traffic from the South Wales district.

The North-Eastern Company, with York as head-quarters, enjoys the ownership of the lines in nearly the whole of Yorkshire and Durham, as well as considerable mileage in Northumberland. From the peculiar position of this railway it has little competition to contend with. The chief opposition it has to work against is the communication with towns on the coast by water. With regard to the inland towns the company has the public almost entirely under its control, and it is thus enabled to demand what rates it may think proper to charge, both as regards local traffic and goods sent to its stations from other companies' lines.

The Midland Company, with its head-quarters at Derby, and its fine station at St. Pancras, has a main line passing through Bedford, with its great agricultural implement establishment, Leicester, with its great hosiery trade, Derby, Sheffield, Leeds, and on to Morecambe and Barrow. During the course it thus takes it has branches extending eastward from Kettering to Cambridge, Leicester to Lynn, and Trent to Nottingham and Lincoln; westward there are lines communicating with Manchester and Liverpool after passing through the Derbyshire hills, with scenery such as can only be found at Matlock, Bakewell, Buxton, and other places along the route. Other important lines extend to the West of England *via* Leicester and Derby to Burton, Birmingham, Worcester, Gloucester, Bath, and Bristol. As will be seen from the following return for October, 1872, the Midland Company affords the chief means for the conveyance of coal to London. We give this rather than a more recent return, on account of the disturbed state of the trade lately.

	Tons.
Midland	151,556
London and North-Western	102,337
Great Northern	71,543
Other Railways	126,164
	451,600

It may be remarked, that notwithstanding the increased price of coal, this was then the largest tonnage ever carried to London by railway in one month.

Next in order comes the Great Eastern Railway, with head-quarters and chief station at Bishopsgate Street. The lines of this company spread over the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge, and Essex, and these districts are almost entirely in the hands of the Great Eastern Company. Notwithstanding this exclusiveness, the Company has not flourished in the same degree as some of the other railways, which is in a great measure to be accounted for by the fact that their district lacks the great manufacturing interests possessed by other companies, such as the Lancashire and Yorkshire.

The Great Northern Company's district lies principally in the county of Lincolnshire. Its lines also extend into Nottinghamshire, and through Hunts and Herts in its route to King's Cross station, London, where the management of the company is carried on. The Great Northern, with the Midland and London and North-Western Companies, constitute the great competitors for traffic with Scotland, each doing its utmost, both as regards speed and accommodation, to outdo the other.

Then there are the great lines south of the Thames, the most extensive being the London and South-Western Railway, with lines 669 miles in extent. Starting from Waterloo station, its lines pass through Hampshire, and running *via* Southampton form a communication with the Isle of Wight, Jersey, Guernsey, and the coast of France. From Salisbury and Southampton its communication proceeds in a westerly direction through Dorset and Devonshire to Barnstaple and Bideford.

The London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway, with its chief terminus at London Bridge, has for its district nearly the whole of Sussex, thus providing communication from the metropolis to Brighton and other seaside towns in that county, and by Newhaven and Dieppe to Paris.

The South-Eastern Railway, with its splendid Cannon Street station, provides the people of Kent with travelling accommodation, and London with a direct communication with Paris by way of Folkestone and Boulogne.

The London, Chatham, and Dover line, with its stations at Ludgate Hill and Victoria, communicates with the north coast of Kent, and affords the shortest sea route to Paris, from Dover to Calais.

In Scotland the principal railways are the Caledonian and North British, the former extending from Aberdeen through Perth and Stirling to Glasgow and Carlisle, and westward to Port Patrick, while the North British Company's territory comprises Roxburgh, Falkirk, Peebles, Berwick, Haddington, to the farthest point of Dumbarton, and eastward through Fife to Dundee and Montrose.

The railways in Ireland are 1988 miles in extent, more than half of which is in the hands of three companies, as follows:—The Great Southern and Western has 445 miles, and with Dublin for a starting-place runs in a southerly direction to Limerick, Cork, and the Lakes of Killarney. The Midland

Great Western has 375 miles, and runs through the centre of the country from Dublin to Galway and Westport in the extreme west. The Irish North-Western has 195 miles, and traverses the northern portion of the country, *via* Enniskillen and Omagh to Londonderry.

From a variety of circumstances the railways of Ireland have not been found to work so successfully as in some other parts of the kingdom, and great efforts are being made to induce the Government to take the matter up with a view to their improvement. The total nominal capital of the railways of the country is only £27,000,000, so that if the Government should decide to purchase the whole of the lines the undertaking would not be a very formidable one.

In examining a Bradshaw's map of England, one wonders to what may be attributed the remarkable manner in which the lines are spread over the country, and how it is that the branches of one company cross and recross those of other companies. It must be remembered that many of the short lines have been made to enable one railway to compete with another, and that originally the lines belonged to a number of small companies. Moreover, when these were made there were few anticipations as to through communication. Some explanation for the circuitous route taken by some lines may be found in the fact that the opposition to their construction was so powerful as to produce a considerable deviation from what would have been in many cases the most advantageous route.

THE TEAR-DIMMED LAMP.

A LITERARY COINCIDENCE.

THE coincidence of ideas in literature has often led to unjust suspicions of plagiarism. There are modes of thought which belong to an age, and seem sometimes to mould in similarity the imagination and style even of those who live apart in seclusion. There are ideas also which are common property, and the only originality which any one can claim is in the way of setting them forth. There are other ideas which germinate no one knows how, spontaneously and separately, in different minds, and yet are alike in colour and form. Sometimes it is possible to trace a common source, but more often it is impossible to say precisely what is original and what is derived.

A curious coincidence of this kind was brought to light by a poem which appeared in the March Part of the "Sunday at Home," from the pen of the Rev. Alexander Grosart, of Blackburn, and which we append, as since revised, under its new title of "The Tear-Dimmed Lamp." Its resemblance to a little poem by the Rev. W. Barnes, whose beautiful compositions in the Dorset dialect have gained him a high place among rural poets, was immediately recognised in the county to which he belongs. The "Dorset County Chronicle" was the first to call public attention to the fact. "Some of our fair readers," said that journal, "may have seen, if not sung, a song by Sullivan, called 'The Mother's Dream,' the words of which are a little poem in the volume of Mr. Barnes's English Poems, published by Macmillan in 1868, but which was printed in our paper—in the Dorset dialect—some years earlier. We find that dream given in a poem in the 'Sunday at Home.' We do not think it likely that both of

the writers invented the dream, and we should like to know whence it came into the mind of the latter one." Mr. Grosart was not slow to respond to this challenge. He wrote:—

"Until this morning I never saw nor heard of this little poem by Mr. Barnes; neither directly nor indirectly have I ever before seen or heard one syllable of it. I may say that, knowing nothing whatever of Mr. Barnes or of his little poem, I am ignorant whether his was based on reality or imagination; but in so far as my own goes it originated exactly thus:—On 27th January, 1868, my first-born child, my 'little Willie,' was taken from me, and, while bruised and bleeding under the stroke, a lady in Liverpool (where I was then resident) told my wife the dream very much as given in the poem. It was as God's own hand to wipe away our tears. It haunted us. It came to my dreams. It stood out as a living reality. I could not rest until I had uttered my emotion in verse. And so early in 1868 I wrote down the first form of my poem, issuing it then as a privately-printed leaflet. The lady from whom I first obtained the facts of the dream was one not at all likely to have read Mr. Barnes's volume. She is now dead, and of course I cannot interrogate her. However it reached her, such is the way it reached me; and I am certain as I am of my own existence that Mr. Barnes's name was never mentioned nor reference made to his poem or any poem. I understood the dream to have been the lady's own, though I may be in this mistaken. But I am not mistaken in asserting for myself absolute ignorance of Mr. Barnes's poem, and as absolute originality in every jot and tittle of my own poem. The dream-fact is the same. Of the treatment in the two pieces the world must judge. I assuredly would be the last to grudge Mr. Barnes all praise. I only add that this small matter teaches two things. (1) That alleged plagiarisms are often coincidences merely. (2) That in the dream-world there are mysteries beyond our fathoming—here assuming that this particular dream was a reality in two cases. May the dream in both poems be used of the Master to stay the weeping of Rachels refusing to be comforted!"

The Rev. W. Barnes as promptly acquitted Mr. Grosart of plagiarism in the matter. His explanation pointed to a common origin, though the coincidence may still be accounted for in other ways. Mr. Barnes says:—

"I did not myself invent the dream, and it seems clear to me that we must both have had it from the same source—a true dream of a mother in the north of England. It was told to my daughter by a lady who, I believe, is now dead, but who was then living at, or by, Manchester (Mrs. Milner), and I believe she told my daughter (now abroad) that it was her own dream; but I do not suppose that she had never told it to more friends than one."

We now place the two poems together for the better comparison of our readers:—

THE TEAR-DIMMED LAMP.

"There shall be . . . boys and girls playing about the streets."—*Zechariah* vii. 5.

I had a dream that wafted me up to the City of Gold:
The walls of jasper flash'd and the crystal splendour roll'd;
Most real dream it was, for all I saw as plain
As when I look on the landscape through my trellis'd
window-pane.

Oh glorious was the Vision! oh wondrous was the throng!
Myriads on myriads walking the shining streets along:
Yearning I gaz'd—until there came the sweet soft mist of
tears—

But not of sorrow—for the sight still'd all my anxious fears.

I saw in one radiant square, marching in song-led tramp,
A thousand little children, each holding a slender lamp:
Oh fair were their bright young faces! oh winsome was the
sight!

I thank my God for this vision from the holy Land of Light.

Far on gleam'd the twinkling line, and I gaz'd upon each one:
At length, with start of wonder, I beheld my own dear son:
I looked and looked all trembling, *his* lamp seem'd going out:
I cried a cry of anguish, of agonising doubt.

Oh, Willie dear, my own lov'd child! oh, tell me what means
this!

Each lamp but thine burns brightly—Art thou not too in
bliss?—

He met my eye, he heard my cry, he nam'd me by my name:
"Oh Mother! how can *my* lamp shine, since *thy* tears dim its
flame?"

Then I awoke, but ne'er again for my dear boy to weep—
Praising the Lord who thus lit up with joy my weary sleep:
'Twas but a dream I know, yet a blessing it brought to me,
For thoughts of the *tear-dimm'd lamp* keep my heart from
murm'ring free.

I tell you my dream, oh mothers, to reach out a helping hand,
As wistful, desolate, childless, in your great sorrow ye stand;
Look up to the City of Gold, and in the line of light,
By faith see your little ones playing, *nor dim their lamps so
bright.*

ALEXANDER B. GROSART.

THE MOTHER'S DREAM.

I'd a dream to-night
As I fell asleep,
Oh! the touching sight
Makes me still to weep:
Of my little lad,
Gone to leave me sad,
Aye, the child I had,
But was not to keep.

As in heaven high,
I my child did seek,
There, in train, came by
Children fair and meek,
Each in lily white,
With a lamp alight;
Each was clear to sight,
But they did not speak.

Then, a little sad,
Came my child in turn,
But the lamp he had,
Oh! it did not burn;
He, to clear my doubt,
Said, half turned about,
"Your tears put it out;
Mother, never mourn."

W. BARNES.

Miss Landon has a similar thought in one of her poems.

THE LITTLE SHROUD.

She put him on a snow-white shroud,
A chaplet on his head,
And gather'd early primroses,
To scatter o'er the dead.

She laid him in his little grave—
 'Twas hard to lay him there,
 When Spring was putting forth its flowers,
 And everything was fair.

She had lost many children—now
 The last of them was gone;
 And day and night she sat and wept
 Beside the funeral stone.

One midnight, while her constant tears
 Were falling with the dew,
 She heard a voice, and lo! her child
 Stood by her weeping too!

His shroud was damp, his face was white:
 He said,—"I cannot sleep,
 Your tears have made my shroud so wet;
 Oh mother, do not weep!"

Oh, love is strong!—the mother's heart
 Was fill'd with tender fears;
 Oh, love is strong!—and for her child
 Her grief restrain'd its tears.

One eve a light shone round her bed,
 And there she saw him stand—
 Her infant in his little shroud,
 A taper in his hand.

"Lo! mother, see my shroud is dry,
 And I can sleep once more!"
 And beautiful the parting smile
 The little infant wore.

And down within the silent grave
 He laid his weary head;
 And soon the early violets
 Grew o'er his grassy bed.

The mother went her household ways—
 Again she knelt in prayer,
 And only asked of Heaven its aid
 Her heavy lot to bear.

L. E. L.

"Here," says the correspondent who points out this coincidence, "are three authors in entire ignorance of each other's writings, impressed with the same fanciful thought, and expressing it in the same poetical and imaginative manner." These unconscious and undesigned coincidences would be a fruitful theme in the curiosities of literature.

Varieties.

HAVANNAH LIFE.—Looked at from a social point of view, what immediately strikes a stranger is that Havannah, like the Rome of Romulus, is a city without women. There die annually, out of a population of 205,000 souls, 3,682 white males to 1,204 white females; while the deaths among the coloured people are, for the males, 1,046; for the females, 1,099. Thus, while the sexual numbers of the Negro and Mulatto population are almost balanced, with respect to the whites the proportion is something more than three males to one female. The fact, however, is self-evident. Hardly any other women than Negresses are ever to be seen about. Ladies with any pretension to youth and beauty would sooner die than venture out unprotected, even for their early mass; and so uncommon is the sight of decent women unattended in the streets that foreign ladies, unacquainted with the custom, and sauntering from shop to shop, become the objects of a curiosity not unfrequently degenerating into impertinence. The causes of the disproportion between males and females are not far to seek. Besides the priests, the soldiers and sailors, and the public functionaries, whose tenure

of office is extremely precarious, and who are either debarred from marriage or dread its encumbrances and responsibilities, there are here thousands of Spanish emigrants of the lower classes attracted to the spot by high wages, but looking upon themselves as birds of passage, who, consequently, would hardly dream of sending for women from home, while their contempt for the native race seldom allows them to look upon the Creole women with honourable intentions. I need not dwell upon the obvious results of this state of things. Suffice it to say that regard for women is by no means enhanced by their scarcity. There ensues an exclusively male society. The charms of *café* and club life, such as they are, wean the Havannah husband from a home where real feminine accomplishments are as unknown as hearthrugs and fireirons. Housekeeping in the town, and still more in the suburbs, is terribly up-hill work. Foreign consuls and other strangers usually try it on their first arrival, but soon learn to look even upon the hotel, with its smells and noises, as a haven from domestic storms. Nothing like available free service is to be obtained in a slaveholding community; the laziness, and, unless awed by the lash, the insolence, of the Negro bondmen communicate themselves to the hired help, whatever be the colour, race, or sex, working at the same task with him in a common household. Hence man's life in Havannah is wholly out of doors, while for woman there is no life within them. In no town in France or Italy have I ever seen so many, or, proportionately, such sumptuous and constantly crowded *cafés* and restaurants. The Havannah merchant is as eager to make money as he is ready to squander it. But the town supplies little besides gross material enjoyment for his money. A box at his third-rate opera, a drive in his dreary Prado, are all the amusements he can have in common with his wife and daughter. For the rest, the women are left to mope alone at home, playing bo-peep with the passers-by from their window gratings, or pacing the flat roofs of their houses like so many Sister Annes waiting for those who are never coming. With so little wholesome domestic society, it is pleasing to hear the character universally given for good conduct to the Havannah women. Few of them, even of the lowest classes, frequent the cockpit and the bull-ring, and the profligacy, the symptoms of which are everywhere only too conspicuous, is of Spanish or American—altogether of foreign importation.—*Times Correspondent.*

TRACTARIAN FORGERY.—The most extraordinary of all the acts of Vandalism by which a fine work of art was ever defaced, was committed so late as the year 1853. It was determined to transform the "Pilgrim's Progress" into a tractarian book. The task was not easy, for it was necessary to make the two sacraments the most prominent objects in the allegory; and of all Christian theologians, avowed Quakers excepted, Bunyan was the one in whose system the sacraments held the least prominent place. However, the Wicket Gate became a type of baptism, and the House Beautiful of the Eucharist. The effect of this change is such as assuredly the ingenious person who made it never contemplated. For, as not a single pilgrim passes through the Wicket Gate in infancy, and as Faithful hurries past the House Beautiful without stopping, the lesson which the fable in its altered shape teaches is, that none but adults ought to be baptized, and that the Eucharist may safely be neglected. Nobody would have discovered from the original "Pilgrim's Progress" that the author was not a Pedobaptist. To turn his book into a book against infant baptism was an achievement reserved for an Anglo-Catholic divine. Such blunders must necessarily be committed by every man who mutilates parts of a great work, without taking a comprehensive view of the whole.—*Lord Macaulay.*

RESTORATION OF ST. GILES'S CATHEDRAL, EDINBURGH.—The ancient church of St. Giles's, famed in Scottish history, has lately undergone repair and restoration. At the opening services Dr. Lindsay Alexander, an Independent minister, took part, and spoke with a liberality of tone not hitherto common among Scottish Dissenters. "In our Protestant places of worship it is an essential requirement that the arrangements should be such as to enable the worshippers with ease and comfort to engage in the service; that they should hear readily the voice of the officiating minister; that they should be enabled to listen to his discourse without being subjected to bodily discomfort; that the worship should be so conducted that all may take part in it; and that all things should be so arranged and done as to minister to the edification of the congregation—these may be regarded as primary and essential conditions of our Protestant worship and service. But these things provided for, there seems no reason why both in the buildings in which we assemble and in the manner of conducting our service we should not employ such help as art and genius can supply to beautify the sanctuary,

and render the service attractive to the taste and affecting to the heart. Why should it be thought that, whilst Christianity may call in learning and reasoning to aid her cause, she must repudiate art and genius as uncongenial if not hostile to her? Why should it be thought fitting and proper that the preacher should adorn his discourse with as much of grace and eloquence as his powers can supply, whilst it is deemed unfitting that the congregation should call in the aid of the architect to give grandeur and beauty to the place in which they worship? or of the musician to refresh and soothe and elevate them by supplying them with the best forms of devotional melody? So far from art being foreign to Christianity, it is as allied to Christianity, and in her service, that art has reached its highest pitch and made its noblest achievements. The finest architecture, the finest painting, the finest music in the world, is that which has been called forth by Christianity or dedicated to her service. It is true that all these have sometimes been made to minister to superstition. I congratulate the minister and members of this congregation—I congratulate the authorities and citizens of Edinburgh, on the success which has crowned the work of restoration. The result is one in which every patriotic Scotchman and every lover of Edinburgh must rejoice; and I trust what has been so well begun will be carried still further, so that our ancient cathedral may be restored to us in all its greatness and in all its beauty."

JUSTICE AND MERCY.—The discharge and acquittal of those who believe in Jesus Christ, and walk in the obedience of faith, stands founded upon the inimitable truth and justice of God. For though it was his own free and undeserved goodness that at first moved him to tender his second covenant to mankind, to accept of the righteousness and satisfaction of another for them: and when none in heaven or earth could be found to perform the one, or undergo the other, to send his own Son to do and suffer it, and to proclaim to mankind, that as many as betake themselves to his covenant, and do accordingly lay hold of it, to give to them the pardon of their sins, and the enjoyment of blessedness; yet, when this great word is pronounced by him, his truth and justice are engaged in the performance of it; the righteousness and satisfaction of Christ are effectually theirs, as if performed by them; their debt paid, and their persons accepted. And so, in that great day, the Almighty God shall, in the face of the whole world, have the glory, as well of his justice as of his mercy, in the salvation of his saints.—*Chief Justice Sir Matthew Hale on "The Knowledge of Christ Crucified."*

TRAINING FOR ETERNITY.—We may be thankful to God when he makes our training consist in the doing great and useful actions, in bringing forth much fruit; but we are each of us doing our work as thoroughly, and answering the end for which we were brought into the world, if we are laid for years of our life upon a bed of sickness, incapable of any further action than that of glorifying God and perfecting our own souls by patient love. Our great business and object is to do God's will, and so to be changed through his Spirit into his image that we may be fitted for living with him for ever.—*Arndt.*

SALMON STAIRS.—The discovery (for it deserves to be called an important discovery) of the fish-pass, which is now capable of letting fish so easily over mill-weirs or navigation-weirs without abstracting water from the mill or navigation, is due to the late Mr. James Smith, of Deanston in Scotland, who had a mill-dam on the river Teith, near Stirling, and who, like many other millers, took great interest in watching the habits of salmon, when jumping at his dam and trying to get over it. He thought of several plans in order to facilitate the passage of the fish without hurting his mill, and he did what most beginners do who have engaged in this problem—he made an inclined plane on the down-stream face of his dam. His dam was about ten feet high, and he made an inclined plane about 240 feet long on the incline, having its head cut below the top of the dam. His own account of the result is highly interesting, for it throws light on mistakes constantly made, with the same results, even to this day:—"I found that the water, in consequence of being allowed to flow without any check down the inclined plane, acquired so great a velocity at the bottom that no fish could stem it; and that whilst it acquired this great velocity, it had, by its rapidity, become so small in depth that there was not sufficient of water to cover the salmon unless when there was a flood in the river. When I found from experience that this did not suit the purpose, and when I saw the salmon attempting to get up and constantly thrown back, I immediately set about to consider some mode to insure their passage, and I commenced by making some experiments with loose boards. I drove spikes into the jointing of the paving, and rested the boards across on

them, and placed them somewhat in the form of steps one above another. When I first began to do this, I put in only a few boards at the bottom with a view of trying the effect of them. It was then in the spawning season, when the fish were very desirous to run up, and the river was in about an average state of water. A few hours after I had put down these boards, I found a number of salmon on the different steps, some on the first step, some on the second, and some on the third; and they were making repeated attempts to ascend the channel farther, but were generally forced back in consequence of the great force of the water. I then had a continuation of the boards made to the very top up to the notch in the dam, and I found that the fish ascended with apparent ease. The steps were about eight feet from one to the other, and they did not go right across the channel. Each alternate board came from the opposite side, and they ran about two-thirds across. There is a pool and an eddy at each to assist the salmon to ascend. By having this kind of ladder it is possible to reconcile the interests of salmon fisheries and the interests of the owners of the mills. By the opening at the head of the ladder being lower than the general surface of the dam, if there is any water at all to spare from the flowing of the mills, it is quite sure to come down the channel and stair."—*Edinburgh Review.*

SEAWORTHY SHIPS.—The prevention of merchant vessels leaving port in an unseaworthy state has never yet been recognised by our Government as one of its duties. Yet we hold it to be beyond all doubt perfectly clear that this should be one of its duties, and when we review the whole case we confess that we cannot think why it has not been undertaken long ago. Over the seaworthiness of vessels carrying passengers, or even Government stores, a most careful supervision is exercised, but over that of private merchantmen none at all. Government recognises no responsibility whatever in the matter, and a trader may leave port in midwinter with her main deck sunk below the water with railway iron, with her plates rusted through, her timbers rotten or parting, or her machinery out of order, without violating one jot or tittle of the law. Such an anomaly is wicked and ridiculous, and must not be allowed to exist any longer. The Board of Trade Act does, it is true, empower a seaman to demand a survey of his ship before sailing, on the peril of having to pay the costs if she be found seaworthy. Such an Act is comparatively worthless. The initiative in such a matter should not be left with fore-mast men. It would be a law not one whit more iniquitous if the Acts regulating the working of mines provided that Government inspection of a coal-pit should only be made upon the requisition of a miner. The point is so obvious that it is not worth arguing, and we cannot suppose that any one will maintain that interference in this matter is beyond the province of a Government which interferes with passenger traffic by sea and by land and with the working of mines and factories, which insists upon the security of walls and platforms, and which actively protects the life of the subject in a thousand other ways.

BARRACKPORE PARK.—It will gratify many readers to learn that Lady Canning's tomb in Barrackpore Park is well cared for. The terrible climate seriously injured Sir Gilbert Scott's mosaic designs on it, and it is to be feared that relic-hunters carried off some of the stones. A hideous shed was erected to protect the monument from the rain. Now the shed has been converted into a rustic canopy, covered with pale purple creepers, and approached by simple Gothic doorways. The mosaic work has been perfectly repaired. The whole scene is as lovely as when the dying lady selected the spot for her resting-place, having when in life made it her favourite resort for sketching the river and its banks. Many a soldier and his wife from the barracks, and many a visitor from distant lands, may be found there at sunset. The Park and the Government House are a favourite resort of Lord Northbrook and his family, who spend every Sunday there. Close by is a little chapel, lined with marble, erected to the memory of those who fell in our Indian wars from Lord Minto's expedition to Java in 1811 to Lord Ellenborough's exploits thirty years afterwards. Lord Mayo's taste greatly improved the park on which Lord Wellesley and Warren Hastings lavished such care. It looks like a bit of England suddenly dropped amid the palms and the banian trees of Bengal, flanked on one side by burning ghauts and temples of Shiv, and fronted by the noble Missionary College of Serampore, which Carey and Marshman erected as a rival to Lord Wellesley's country seat. The Park menagerie is now well stocked with lions, tigers, panthers, bears, and monkeys, while close by some forty Commissariat elephants are housed. A little farther up the Hooghly, on the same left bank, are the water-works which supply Calcutta, and the great gunpowder factory of Eeshapore.—*Times Correspondent.*